

romantic history never frowns -dull by repetition.

For this is that serpent column of Corinthian brass which was dedicated to Apollo by the thankful and exultant Greeks after the battle of Plutaea, when the hosts of the Persian Xerxes were thrust from the soil of Greece never to return. It bears upon its coils the names of the thirty-one Greek cities which fought for freedom, and there is still to be seen, inscribed in slightly larger characters than the rest, the name of the Tenians, who, as Herodotus tells us, succeeded in proving to the satisfaction of their sin- ter states that they deserved inclusion in so honourable a memorial. The history of this column from the fifth century before the Christian era down to the present time is to be read in a long succession of Greek, Roman, and modern historians; and as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century the three heads of the serpents were still in their place. But even in its mutilated state there is perhaps no relic of antiquity which can vie in interest with this column, associated as it was in the day of its fashioning with Pausanias and Xerxes and with Marathonius. We have then to think of it standing for seven centuries in the holiest place of all Hellas, the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. There it was surmounted by a golden tripod, on which sat the

priestess who uttered the oracles which, in important crises, prompted the policy and guiltiest development of the cities of Greece?. The column in hollow, and It is possible that the mephitic exhalations, which are supposed to have stupefied tin⁴ when she was mounted up